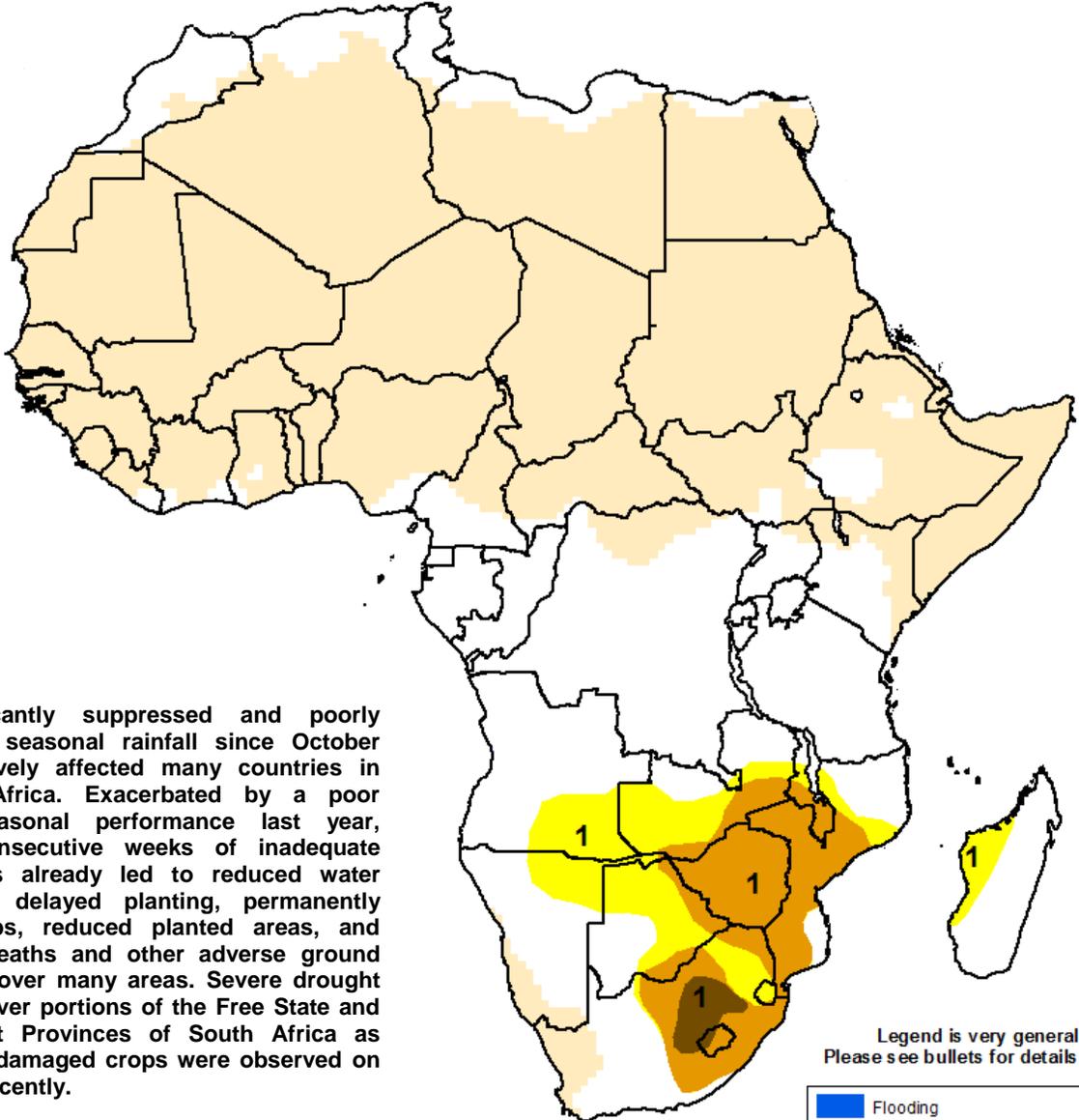




Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook January 28 – February 3, 2016

- An erratic rainfall distribution since the start of the season has led to severe drought, impacting maize crops over South Africa.
- Increased rains forecast across portions of southeastern Africa, with suppressed rains expected over the Caprivi Strip region and South Africa into early February.



1) Significantly suppressed and poorly distributed seasonal rainfall since October has negatively affected many countries in southern Africa. Exacerbated by a poor rainfall seasonal performance last year, several consecutive weeks of inadequate rainfall has already led to reduced water availability, delayed planting, permanently wilted crops, reduced planted areas, and livestock deaths and other adverse ground conditions over many areas. Severe drought is posted over portions of the Free State and North West Provinces of South Africa as wilted and damaged crops were observed on the fields recently.

Legend is very general.
Please see bullets for details.



Erratic January rainfall strengthens dryness across southeastern Africa.

During the last observation period, heavy seasonal rains were limited to northern portion of the southern Africa domain, as reduced rainfall was observed across southwestern and southeastern Africa. According to satellite information, the highest weekly rainfall accumulations (>100mm) were registered in southern Tanzania, northern Mozambique, and localized areas of central Mozambique, and western Madagascar (**Figure 1**). Enhanced rainfall was also received across the Caprivi Strip region, eastern Namibia, western Botswana and western South Africa bringing ample moisture to several arid locations. In contrast, suppressed rainfall was recorded across western Angola and much of Namibia.

During the month of January, the anomalous dryness associated with the poor southern Africa monsoon has taken a new shape compared to the anomalously dry conditions observed earlier in the season. In many areas in Angola and South Africa where monsoon rains typically see an earlier start of season compared to other areas in southern, increased and more frequent January precipitation have been observed in many of these areas, which has helped to alleviate the seasonal dryness and replenish water availability on the short term. Analysis of vegetation health conditions in late January reflects the most positive changes have occurred mainly over southern Angola and in parts of Maize Triangle region of South Africa.

However, the largest precipitation deficits have been concentrated over western Madagascar, southern Zambia, central and western Mozambique, southern Malawi, and neighboring portions of Zimbabwe. Many local areas in eastern Zimbabwe and Mozambique are now experiencing less than a quarter of their normal rainfall since late December (**Figure 2**). Because it is this region where monsoonal rainfall is climatologically higher and most frequent compared to other regions in southern Africa in January, the absence of rainfall in the southeast has led to an alarmingly rapid strengthening of moisture deficits. Furthermore, the erratic distribution in rainfall since the beginning of the season has resulted in wilted and damaged maize crops over portions of the Free State and North West Provinces of South Africa. The continuation of infrequent and low rainfall accumulations is likely to lead to many adverse ground conditions and negatively impact ongoing cropping activities.

During the next outlook period, models suggest a southward shift of the monsoonal convergence over southeastern Africa, bringing much needed improvement of seasonal precipitation over many anomalously dry areas in Zambezi River basin. Above average weekly rainfall accumulations in excess of 75mm are forecast across portions of southern Zambia, Malawi, and northern Mozambique. However, the return of seasonally suppressed rainfall is forecast across parts of southern Angola, Botswana, South Africa and southern Madagascar (**Figure 3**).

Note: The hazards outlook map on page 1 is based on current weather/climate information and short and medium range weather forecasts (up to 1 week). It assesses their potential impact on crop and pasture conditions. Shaded polygons are added in areas where anomalous conditions have been observed. The boundaries of these polygons are only approximate at this continental scale. This product does not reflect long range seasonal climate forecasts or indicate current or projected food security conditions.

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